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BATMAN

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THERE'S
NOTHING SO
SAVAGE--



--AS A MAN
DESTROYING
HIMSELF!



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HE PROWLs THE ROOFTOPS, CLINGS TO THE DARK, LIVING THE NIGHT, LOOKING FOR TROUBLE. NOT JUST ANY TROUBLE. THE RANDOM VIOLENCE OF A GOTHAM STREET IS NOT HIS MISSION.

LIKE A HEAT-SEEKING MISSILE, THIS

HAS A SPECIFIC TARGET.

BATMAN

A HUMAN TARGET.



AND THEY'RE ABOUT TO GET ROLLED.
AND ROCKED.

THAT REMINDS ME--
WERE YOU ABLE TO GET THOSE
TICKETS?

TO THE
DEL FUEBOS GIG? OF
COURSE! WOULD I EVER
DISAPPOINT YOU?



YOUR WALLET
OR YOUR TEETH,
CREEP--



TAKE IT! IT'S
ONLY MONEY--
JUST DON'T HURT
ME--OR MY
LADY--

GOD, I HATE THE
WAY YOU TALK!
"ONLY MONEY"
YOUR "LADY"!
YUCCH!

SO I'LL TAKE YOUR TEETH, TOO, WIMP.







THE NIGHT IS COOL AND CLEARN. HE FEELS
PURSED. HE HAD WONDERED HOW IT WOULD
FEEL, GOING OVER THE LINE...

IT FELT
GOOD.

HE HAD
SWORN AN
OATH TO
SERVE AND
PROTECT, BUT
KILLING IN
PURSUIT OF
THAT GOAL WAS
MEANT TO BE
IN SELF-DEFENSE,
ONLY--

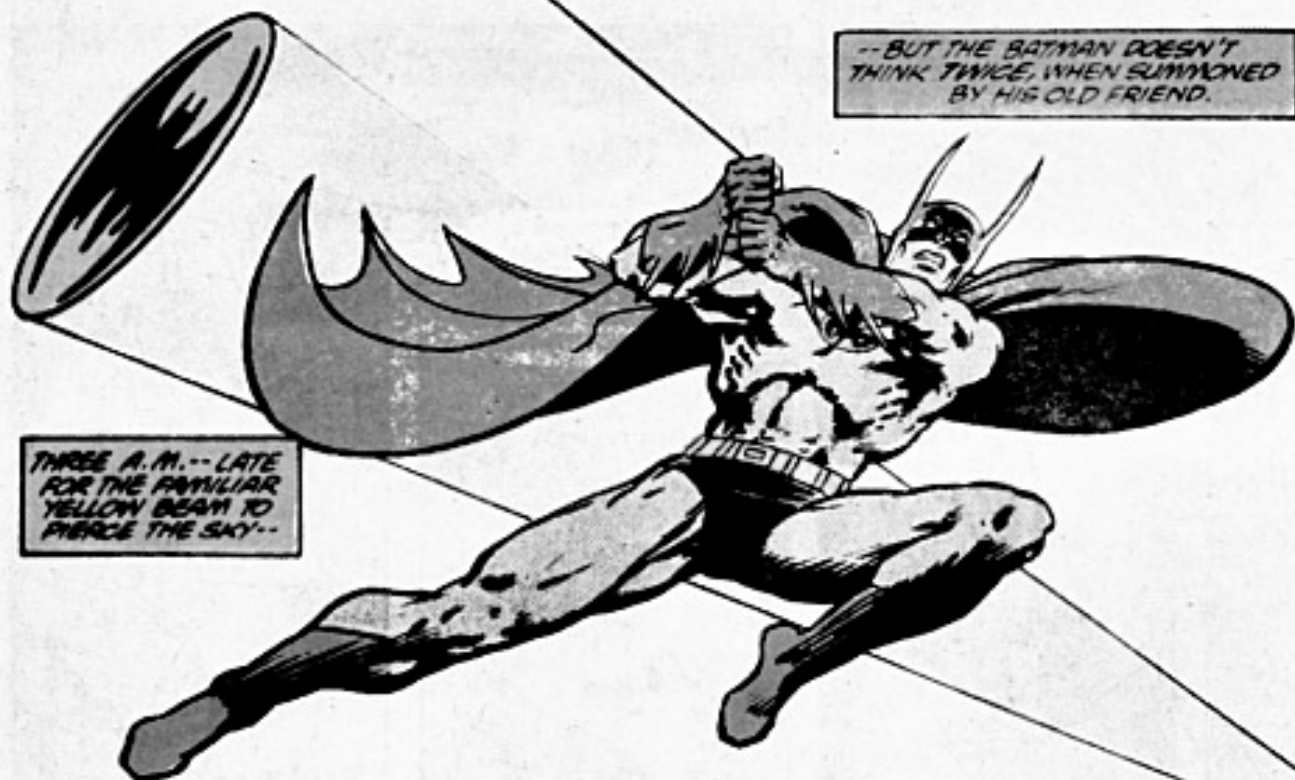
BUT HE HAD GROWN
TIRED OF PLAYING
SURGEON TO THE
CITY'S DISEASES--

IT WAS TIME FOR
SOME PREVENTIVE
MEDICINE.

HE WAS BATMAN.
HE HAD A JOB
TO DO.

TOMORROW NIGHT, HE WOULD
STRIKE AGAIN-- INTO THE
HEART OF DARKNESS, WHERE
HE FELT AT HOME--





--BUT THE BATMAN DOESN'T
THINK TWICE, WHEN SUMMONED
BY HIS OLD FRIEND.

THREE A.M.--LATE
FOR THE FAMILIAR
YELLOW BEAM TO
PIERCE THE SKY--



HE
DOESN'T
EVEN
THINK
ONCE.



HE JUST
GOES.

HOLD IT
RIGHT THERE,
BATMAN!

WHOOOPS.

BULLETS DANCE
AROUND HIM, AND
HE DANCES
AROUND
THEM--

FUNNY. HE ISN'T
IN THE MOOD TO
DANCE.

BUT THEN, I DIDN'T
SEE THE COMMISSIONER
ON THAT ROOFTOP--NOT
THAT I COULD SEE MUCH
OF ANYTHING WITH THAT
BEAM BLINDING ME...

THE ONE MAN
I NEVER EXPECTED
TO BETRAY ME--

BUT I *DID* SEE THAT
YOUNG DEPUTY COM-
MISSIONER--BARNES--
MANNING THE BULLHORN...

MAYBE I WASN'T THE *ONLY*
ONE BETRAYED TONIGHT...

AT THE SUBURBAN
HOME OF POLICE
COMMISSIONER
JAMES GORDON,
TWO FRIENDS CATCH
A LATE NEWS BROADCAST.

THE BATMAN
IS WANTED
FOR MURDER.

THIS IS AN INDEFENSIBLE
ACT OF VIGILANTISM. A
SIMPLE MUGGING HAS
BEEN TURNED INTO A
MULTIPLE MURDER--

I NEVER REALIZED THAT MUGGINGS WERE "SIMPLE."



BARNES
WANTS MY
JOB. WE
BOTH
KNOW
THAT.

IN AN INTERESTING
SIDEBAR, THE TWO
ALLEGED MUGGERS
WHO WERE SLAIN
TONIGHT WERE
ONCE ARRESTED
FOR MURDER THEM-
SELVES. THEY WERE
RELEASED JUST A
LITTLE OVER A YEAR
AGO, ON A LEGAL
TECHNICITY.



MUGGING "SIMPLE"-- MURDER
A "SIDEBAR." WHAT A WORLD.

THIS IS NO TIME TO
BROOD! SOME KILLER
IS POSING AS YOU! I'M
NOT GOING TO STAND
FOR YOU BEING
PERSECUTED--



YOU HAVE
TO. PROTECT
YOUR JOB,
JIM. AND
HELP ME
KEEP TABS
ON BARNES
AND
COMPANY.

THEY TOOK ADVANTAGE OF OUR
FRIENDSHIP-- THEY LURED YOU WITH
THE SIGNAL, THE SYMBOL THAT
STANDS FOR OUR TRUST.



NEVER MIND THAT.
PRETEND TO BE ANGRY
WITH ME-- GO ALONGS WITH
THE WITCH HUNT... WHILE
I CONDUCT MY OWN.



THE NEXT MORNING, SATURDAY, AT A SUBURBAN MANSION, A MILLIONAIRE, HIS WARD AND THEIR BUTLER BEGIN A NEW DAY...

THE PAPERS ARE COMPARING YOU TO THAT BERNHARD GOETZ GUY!

JASON, I TOLD YOU-- THEY'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT ME!

How 8 survived on cruel sea on of w

YOU HAVEN'T EATEN A THING, SIR-- SHOULD I PREPARE SOMETHING ELSE...?

NO, ALFRED-- I'VE GOT A DIFFERENT JOB FOR YOU.

CERTAINLY, SIR.

CALL EVERY THEATRICAL COSTUME AGENCY IN THE CITY.

YES, SIR.

I WANT YOU TO INQUIRE ABOUT RENTING A BATMAN COSTUME.

SIR?

IN THE CAVERN BENEATH THE MANSION, THE NERVE CRIME COMPUTER PROVIDES A LEAD--

HERE IT IS... HOWARD DESPOND-- THE NAME OF THE HUSBAND OF THE WOMAN WHO WAS MURDERED BY THOSE MUGGERS THAT YOU... I MEAN, THAT WERE KILLED BY THAT GUY WHO'S POSING AS YOU...

JASON, YOU DON'T THINK I...

WHAT WOULD BE SO WRONG IF YOU DID?

I'M NOT A
MURDERER, SON.
MURDER IS THE
LINE WE *MUST*
NOT CROSS--

IN SELF-DEFENSE.
JASON, YOU'RE WELL
AWARE THAT WE
PLAY A *DANGEROUS*
GAME... A GAME I
PERHAPS SHOULD
NOT HAVE INVOLVED
YOU IN.

SURE,
YOU
SHOULD!

YOU'VE
KILLED
BEFORE--

--THEN IT'S TIME I HUNG
UP MY COWL.

I GUESS.
BUT I'M
STILL GLAD
THOSE
GUYS ARE
DEAD.

ME, TOO,
JASON--
BUT I'M
NOT PROUD
OF IT.

LISTEN, SON, IF WE'RE
NO BETTER THAN THE *LIFE* WHO
SNUFF OUT HUMAN LIFE LIKE
IT'S WORTH NOTHING AT ALL,
THEN, WELL--



SIR, I'M AFRAID
WE'VE STRUCK A DEAD
END. I FOUND SEVEN
COMPANIES IN THE
GOTHAM WITH BATMAN
COSTUMES FOR RENTAL--
BUT NONE WERE
AVAILABLE.





NIGHT FALLS.
BODY COUNT RISES.



YOUR RECKLESS FRIEND
IS REALLY OVER THE EDGE,
MR. COMMISSIONER. I
DON'T HAVE TO TELL YOU
THE MEDIA IS ACCUSING
YOU OF *SHIELDING* HIM.
IF YOU CAN LEAD THE
POLICE TO HIM...



IF HE'S A MURDERER,
BATMAN IS NO FRIEND
OF *MINE*. I'LL HELP
ANY WAY I CAN,
BARNES.



WHAT
HAPPENED
HERE,
COMMISS-
SIONER?

AH--MR. DAVIS
OF THE *NEWS*. I
DID PROMISE YOU
AN INTERVIEW.
LET'S WALK...



LIGUOR STORE
ROBBERY WAS IN
PROGRESS, BUT
THE *BATMAN*
CAME ALONG--



--AND ACCORDING TO THE
OWNER OF THE STORE,
BATMAN SNAPPED THE
PERP'S NECK LIKE
A TWIG--



CONTINUED ON 482 PAGE FOLLOWING

OWNER WAS MILDLY IRRITATED THAT BATMAN CHOSE, FOR GOOD MEASURE APPARENTLY, TO TOSS THE WOULD-BE THIEF THROUGH THE PLATE-GLASS WINDOW.

ONE INTERESTING ITEM, THOUGH-- I HAPPEN TO RECOGNIZE THIS PARTICULAR PERP--

WHO IS HE?

THE CORRECT QUESTION IS WHO ~~MAY~~ HE-- HE WAS AN ARMED ROBBER WHO WALKED AWAY FROM THE FATAL SHOOTING OF A CONVENIENCE STORE MANAGER, LAST YEAR.

DON'T TELL ME. HE GOT OFF ON A TECHNICALITY.

YES. REMEMBER TOMMY CARMA?

SURE-- THE YOUNGEST DETECTIVE IN THE CITY, PROMOTED FROM UNIFORM WHEN HE SINGLE-HANDEDLY RESCUED A YOUNG WOMAN FROM A STREET GANG--

BUT HE WAS TOO EAGER. HE BROKE TOO MANY RULES-- AND A FEW TOO MANY ARMS. IT MADE HIM A SLOPPY COP-- PERPS WALKED 'CAUSE OF HIS "POLICE BRUTALITY" CHARGES--

I REMEMBER THE REST OF THE STORY...

THOUGHT YOU WOULD. AND I THOUGHT YOU'D MAKE THE CARMA CONNECTION OF THESE KILLINGS-- WHICH I'LL MENTION TO BARNES... TOMORROW. TAKE CARE, OLD FRIEND.



WHY CAN'T I GO ALONG?

THIS ONE'S TOO DANGEROUS, JASON.

THE NAME IS *ROBIN*-- AND DANGER IS WHAT MY JOB'S SUPPOSED TO BE ABOUT!



NOT DANGER, JASON. *JUSTICE*. LET'S NOT CONFUSE THE ENDS WITH THE MEANS.



TOMMY CARMA'S CONFUSION ABOUT THE *ENDS* AND THE *MEANS* IS WHAT MAKES HIM A VERY DANGEROUS MAN--



BUT WASN'T HE A COP?



WHY IS THAT?

YES-- AND A GOLDEN GLOVES BOXER, A BLACK-BELT KARATE EXPERT, A FORMER MARINE, AND A MAN WITH A GOOD REASON TO HATE CRIMINALS.

TOMMY CARMA COLLARED A MOB *HITMAN* IN THE *ACT*-- HAD HIM DEAD-BANG COLD-- NO TECHNICALITY, THIS TIME--



TOMMY WAS THE ONLY EYEWITNESS, THOUGH, AND THE MOB TRIED TO WASTE HIM-- ONLY IT WAS TOMMY'S WIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL WHEN THE CAR EXPLODED. HIS SIX-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER WAS IN THE CAR, TOO--

MIDNIGHT. THE BATMAN
USUALLY FEELS AT HOME
ABOUT NOW-- BUT IT
CHILLS HIM, SOMEHOW,
TO THINK OF HIS TWISTED
DOUBLE FROWLING THE
DARK STREETS WITH HIM--



CARMA'S SUPPOSED TO
HAVE TAKEN A NIGHT
WATCHMAN JOB. LET'S
HOPE HE'S THERE... LET'S
HOPE HE HAS AN ALIBI--

AS MUCH AS I WANT TO NAIL THIS IMPOSTER, I ~~APAY~~
IT ISN'T CARMA-- I'D RATHER THIS BE SOME DEVILISH
UNDERWORLD ATTEMPT TO BLACKEN MY NAME--

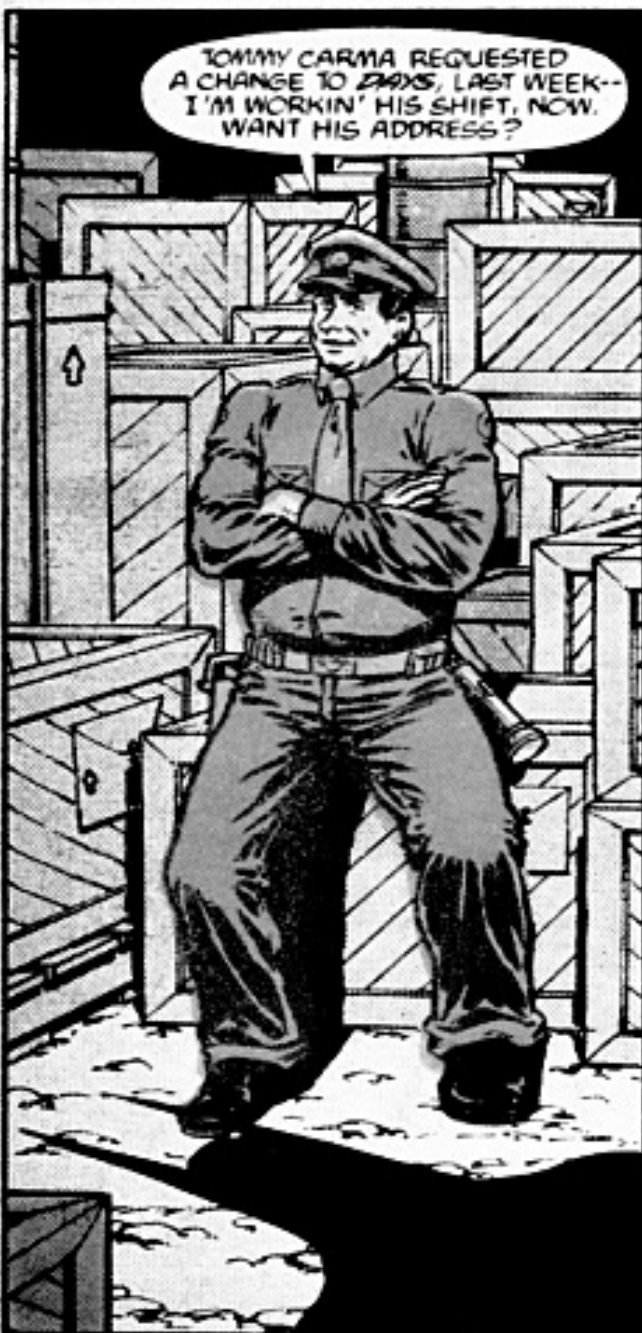


--ANYTHING, EXCEPT
A DECENT MAN GONE
OVER THE EDGE-- A COP
TURNED CRAZED
CRUSADER.

I'D HAVE TO ~~STOP~~ HIM-- EVEN
THOUGH, AS JASON INSTINCTIVELY
SEEMS TO KNOW, OUR MISSIONS
DIFFER ONLY SLIGHTLY...



TOMMY CARMA REQUESTED
A CHANGE TO DAYS, LAST WEEK--
I'M WORKIN' HIS SHIFT, NOW.
WANT HIS ADDRESS?

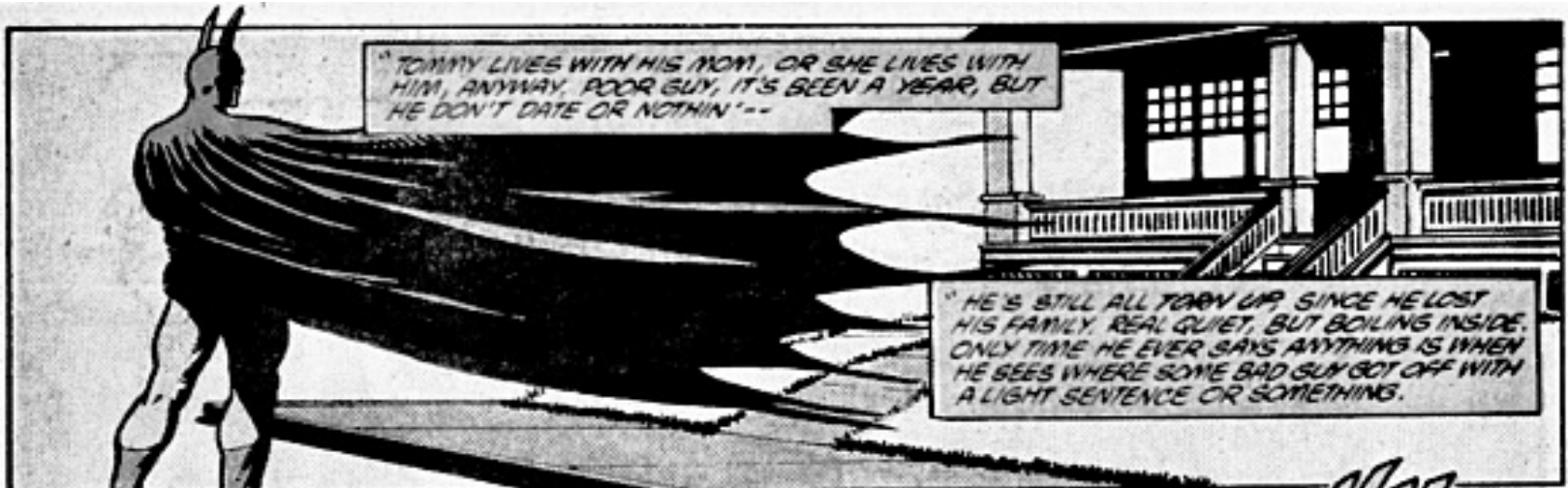


HE'D GET A BANG
OUTTA MEETING YOU
--YOU'RE SORT OF
A HERO TO HIM--!



AND DON'T SWEAT ME PHONIN' THE
COPS ON YA-- I THINK WHAT YOU'RE
DOIN' TO THEM MUGGERS IS
GREAT! SNUFF 'EM ALL,
I SAY!





DON'T BE MAD AT ME FOR DRINKING,
SON-- I *KNOW* WHAT THE DOCTOR SAYS
BUT AFTER A LONG DAY LOOKIN' AFTER
SICK OLD FOLKS AT THE NURSING HOME...
WELL, YOU GET SO YOU CAN'T LOOK
ANOTHER BED PAN IN THE FACE--

AND, SON-- WHAT YOU'RE DOING--
I KNOW YOU THINK IT'S RIGHT--
BUT IT ISN'T. IT'S *WRONG*.

IT'S HARD
ON YOUR
OLD
MOTHER--

SON! FACE REALITY--
YOU'RE *NOT* THE BATMAN!
YOU'RE *TOMMY*...

MY
TOMMY...

I KNOW YOU
ADMIRE HIM...
WORSHIPPED HIM, AS
A TEENAGER... WANTED
TO BE *LIKE* HIM--

YOU EVEN
NAMED YOUR
LITTLE GIRL
"ROBIN"--

BUT YOU'RE
NOT HIM--
YOU'RE *NOT*
THE *BATMAN*...

NOT THE
BATMAN...



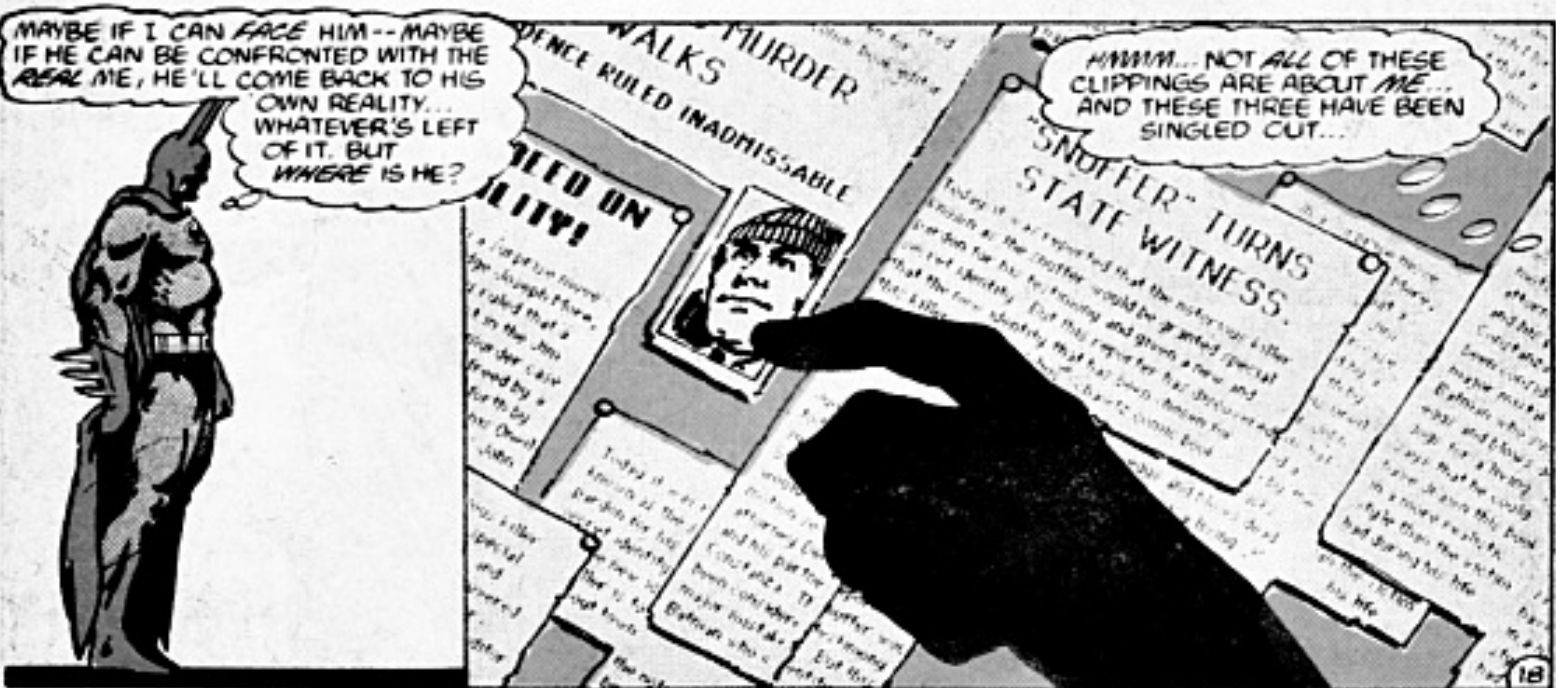
THESE CLIPPINGS-- THEY GO BACK YEARS... TO MY FIRST CASES...



STRANGE. WITHOUT KNOWING OF THE BATCAVE, HE'S DONE HIS INSTINCTIVE BEST TO APPROXIMATE IT... COMPUTER... POLICE BAND RADIO... MAKESHIFT CRIME LAB...



JUDGING BY WHAT HIS MOTHER SAID, CARMA ISN'T JUST IMPERSONATING ME-- HE THINKS HE IS ME.



MAYBE IF I CAN FACE HIM-- MAYBE IF HE CAN BE CONFRONTED WITH THE REAL ME, HE'LL COME BACK TO HIS OWN REALITY... WHATEVER'S LEFT OF IT. BUT WHERE IS HE?

HMM... NOT ALL OF THESE CLIPPINGS ARE ABOUT ME... AND THESE THREE HAVE BEEN SINGLED OUT...

WALKS MURDER
DEFENCE RULED INADMISSABLE

TEED ON
LITY!



"SNOOPER" TURNS
STATE WITNESS.

GOOD LORD, MAN-- ARE YOU CRAZY?

THAT DOES SEEM TO BE THE QUESTION.



BUT IT'S NOT THE ONE I WANT ANSWERED. WHERE ARE YOU KEEPING THE SNUFFER?



THIS IS WHAT I GET FOR WORKING LATE. YOU ASSHOLE, OF COURSE, TO A CERTAIN MOB ASSASSIN, WHO IS DUE TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE GRAND JURY TOMORROW.



IT'S COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT THIS WHOLESALER IN SLAUGHTER IS GETTING IMMUNITY, A NEW FACE, A NEW LIFE AND A FLEET OF TAX-PAYER'S MONEY TO RAT ON OTHER RATS.



LIFE IS COMPROMISE. WE HAVE HIM ON ICE. THE FBI'S IN ON IT WITH US, BECAUSE HE'S THEIR'S NEXT.

GO TO YOUR ROOM, LOWLIFE.



STAY AWAY FROM THE WINDOW, SNUFFER.

COME ON, GUYS-- DEAL ME IN. WE'RE ALL PROFESSIONALS HERE!



I WANT
YOU TO MAKE
A **BIG**
SPLASH IN
THE PAPERS,
SNUFFER...

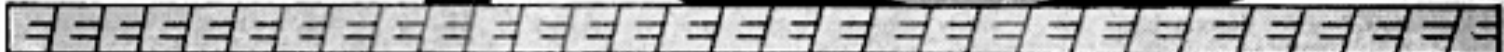
AND ON
THE
CEMENT.

I DON'T
WANNA
DIE!

SHUT-UP! I DIDN'T DROP
YOU, BUT I ALMOST WISH I
HAD. SAVING YOUR LIFE IS
THE MOST DISGUSTING THING
I'VE DONE IN A LONG TIME...

THANKS... BUT WHAT
DID YOU ~~CARE~~ ME FOR,
IF YOU WAS GONNA
SAVE ME?







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THE BATMAN/ DICK TRACY CONNECTION

by Max Allan Collins

When editor Denny O'Neil gave me the opportunity to script an issue of BATMAN, I took the assignment eagerly. While I've worked in the comics field for almost ten years, my experience has been in the syndicated strip field, with DICK TRACY (for Tribune Media Services), and in that of so-called independent or alternative comics, with *Ms. Tree* (for several publishers, currently Renegade Press). I viewed this assignment as a chance for a longtime comic book fan to (finally) work for the company that started it all.

But, most of all, I relished getting to spin a yarn about my favorite comic-book superhero, a character whose four-color exploits I've followed since the late '50s. I was about ten years old when I first read BATMAN, and any BATMAN story that doesn't turn me into a rapt ten-year-old again doesn't really cut it with me.

I don't mean to suggest that BATMAN is kid's stuff. For one thing, when I was ten, I didn't consider myself a kid. BATMAN was serious stuff to me—like another character I was following, Zorro (not the Disney version, but the sporadic Dell one-shot comic books, usually drawn by the brilliant Everett Raymond Kinstler). Batman was a hardhitting crime fighter who donned a mask and cloak to better do battle with (and strike fear into) the criminal element. I liked what has come to be seen as the "film noir" quality of the strip—Batman went where the criminals were: the dark nighttime streets of Gotham City. I liked the fact that he took along a young partner (who was probably about my age, I reasoned—no "kid," either) and that he treated this young partner exactly as that: a partner, and a trusted one.

When I began reading comics, the superhero books were dying out—only BATMAN, WONDER WOMAN and SUPERMAN remained a vital part of the scene (though I vaguely remember read-

ing the final few issues of PLASTIC MAN). When I began reading BATMAN, his adventures (signed Bob Kane) were often the work of writer Bill Finger and artist Dick Sprang. There has been a lot of talk, lately, about the "definitive" BATMAN. With all due respect to the likes of Bob Kane, Jerry Robinson, Neal Adams, Dick Giordano, Frank Robbins, Jim Aparo, Marshall Rogers, Steve Englehart, Frank Miller and even one Denny O'Neil, the definitive BATMAN to me will always be the Finger/Sprang version.

Much of that has to do with Dick Sprang's wonderfully exaggerated, perspective-bending style, as vibrant and dynamic a vehicle for the darknight detective as the Batmobile itself. Like Bob Kane, Sprang sprang largely from Chester Gould. Sprang was a looser, more fluid artist than Cher; but, like Kane, he shared with Gould an ability to tell an adventure story in a manner that instinctively merged caricature and illustration. This was particularly obvious in Sprang's villains (his Joker had a mouth like a frying pan and you could spear a fish with Penguin's beak).

Though I didn't exactly know it at the time, I was obviously attracted to BATMAN because of the Kane/Sprang artistic resemblance to Chester Gould. As has been noted elsewhere (and done to death by the p.r. folks), I was a major TRACY fan as a kid—from about age seven on. I followed TRACY not in the papers, but in the Harvey reprint comics. Since the DICK TRACY comic book only came out once a month, I had to find a few other comic books to fill in with between hits of Gould. And, soon, BATMAN had taken a strong second place behind TRACY; besides, I could get extra jolts of BATMAN from DETECTIVE and WORLD'S FINEST.

It was years later before I understood what it was—beyond the Kane/Sprang artwork—that made BATMAN such a

natural choice for a TRACY fan. BATMAN was, essentially, DICK TRACY in superhero drag (Bob Kane once admitted as much to me). Like Tracy, he was a firm-jawed hero who swore to battle crime over the corpse of a fallen loved one (in Batman's case, there were two loved ones, parents, whereas Tracy lost his father-in-law-to-be). Like Tracy, he fought an array of grotesque villains whose physiognomies mirrored their colorful monikers. Like Tracy, he often fought side-by-side with a youthful ward (in Tracy's case, it was an adopted son, Junior). Like Tracy, he relied on the science of a crime lab to aid his already keen abilities as a detective. And, like Tracy, he never failed to track down and bring a rough sort of justice to the law-breakers.

The major difference between the two detectives was one of costuming; and pacing. TRACY was designed for newspaper strips, and, in comic book reprint, his adventures often took many months to play out (even in the papers, an average story ran over three months). BATMAN, on the other hand designed directly for the comic books, could accomplish in 8 to 12 wild pages what it took TRACY many methodical months to do! And Batman pulled that off several times an issue, to bat—er, to boot.

TRACY sputtered out as a monthly comic book, after a distinguished run of 145 issues; but BATMAN continues on, partially because the character was designed specifically for the medium in which he became a superstar. Both characters endure, but in their original chosen medium (both attempts to make a newspaper strip out of BATMAN proved less than enormously successful).

As for me, I remain a lucky ten-year-old who got a chance to have a crack at both of his favorite comic-book characters.